



MEDIA WELFARE AXED

Wilson frees Native newspapers

by Sandy Armstrong

In an unprecedented move, Finance Minister Michael Wilson has taken millions of dollars in Federal Grants away from non-profit societies whose sole purpose is to publish a newspaper.

It has been suggested that the policies of arbitrary funding to Society Newsletters is not justifiable when examples of independent, non-government funded and self-sufficient newspapers exists.

Alberta Native News, this province's only non-government funded newspaper for Native people, has been publishing for almost 6 years, circulating to Native communities throughout western Canada.

The CBC's National, usually reluctant to talk about government funded media, singled out the *Alberta Native News* as the only one to agree with the radical Federal cuts to newspapers.

Dave Moser, the paper's publisher and founder, had this to say: "The Great Spirit works in strange ways for all of us. To attain freedom as a People, a newspaper or a nation, we must first learn that freedom does not come from media welfare, deficits or grantsmanship. Only the disbanding of these things will encourage self-sufficiency. Freedom from European imposed governments and money is the first step in the creation of a real 'Canadian Culture', based on Canada's First Peoples and their generosity towards immigrants."

Moser added, "We've pushed for this here for some time. This may be the only newspaper in the country that thinks government handouts are the problem, not the solution. Is that because virtually every other paper in Canada takes these handouts?"

"We feel sorry for the people losing jobs and communications throughout the country, but at least now we can have an environment for fair

non-subsidized free-market competition," explained Moser.

"As long as I own this paper," he added, "we will continue to strive towards independence, not

only for ourselves, but especially for those who think they can't attain it. Freedom of the press is a fundamental human right and an important gauge for democracy."



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EDITORIAL

Grants only make the news when they're cut

The Edmonton Journal has come out against the recent budget cuts to Native newspapers.

Does the Edmonton Journal take handouts from the government? Of course not. No credible newspaper takes direct funding grants from the government.

So the principles that the Journal preaches for itself and others in the mainstream media do not apply to our Native or ethnic papers.

Of course, Native newspapers have always been, by definition, poor brothers who must be Artificially Subsidized by benevolent governments.

The Journal chose Windspeaker as their example of a Native newspaper. Did the Journal ask how much money they received from the government before calling this dependent bureaucracy a newspaper?

According to the Journal, Windspeaker is "Canada's most successful newspaper."

Does the Journal gauge the size of a business' success on the size of their government grant package? If so, Windspeaker has been very successful. Perhaps they are the most successful.

But newspapers are not built on grantsmanship, they are built on salesmanship.

Has it ever occurred to the Edmonton Journal that newspapers should sell advertising and possibly subscriptions to pay their own way and attain freedom and independence in that way?

Don't forget, money obtained from advertising is much more precious than money obtained from government grants. Because it is so hard to come by, naturally the paper spends it in a more responsible way, ensuring the paper's viability.

Independence paves the way for free and fair market competition, as well as increased creativity, productivity and viability.

The March 4 Journal Editorial stated, "Dependent Native people have little to fear from Wilson's new budget, although in the long run they will suffer too. It is the independent uppy aboriginal Canadians, the

young and the dynamic who are the immediate targets."

Now, who are these independent, uppy aboriginal Canadians? Are they just elaborate grantsmen, with agendas to ensure our slavery to the government purse?

If they are so independent and dynamic, why do they need handouts at all? And as far as the "dependent Native people who should have nothing to fear," it seems to me that these people should have everything to fear from a society that effectively takes away their motivation to better themselves, and make a decent living.

The Journal outlined Windspeaker's advertising "profits" as being \$350,000.

What expenses were considered in arriving at this figure? What about the huge building, or the elaborate computer production equipment, etc.? What about the millions of dollars that this so-called paper has taken from the government for years now? Where does this fit in their profitless statement? It is indeed creative bookkeeping to say that about such a massive dependent bureaucracy, that has personally increased the size of the National Debt.

Would the Edmonton Journal like us to believe that throwing millions of dollars at people will help them in any way?

Society teaches us to get as much as we can for free and work for the rest.

Now wouldn't it be better for all concerned (including the overburdened taxpayer) if the motivation was to take nothing for free and work for and be proud of everything you do on your own?

The most interesting quote came from Bert Crowfoot, publisher of the hugely funded Windspeaker: "Our paper offers news from a Native perspective. I'm proud of our independence." Are you sure he isn't saying: "I'm proud I need more grants?"

Luckily, in Alberta we have one example of an independent, non-government funded, free and real newspaper business.

Somehow against all odds, our paper, the Alberta Native News, has survived almost six years despite heavily funded competition.

Let us be an example that Native newspapers can exist independent of government grants and influence.

Long Live the Native Free Press!

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Pas Band to expand Reserve mall

by Jim Estes

In its continuing drive toward self-determination and economic self-reliance, the Pas Indian Band of Manitoba is expanding its 195,000 square foot Otineka Mall.

The mall, which is located on the Pas Indian Reserve adjacent to the community of The Pas, already acts as a major shopping centre for the region. Indeed, average retail traffic for the mall is 15,000 persons per week, and the complex generates approximately \$15 million annually in sales.

The mall, which opened in 1975, presently contains more than 20 retail outlets, including an IGA supermarket (which is owned by the band), a MET department store, and various stores, boutiques, recreational outlets and services. For example, the lower level of the mall contains a kindergarten and nursery, and — in addition to a major recreational facility — the Otineka Bowling Lanes.

The upper level of the mall contains the offices of a number of major Native organizations, and houses five government departments, including Northern Affairs, Labour and Employment Services, and Highways. The mall also provides ample space for staging special events, community promotions, and public awareness programs.

Recently, an economic boom in the natural resources sector has created high demand for additional retail space in the region. Indeed, the purchase of the Manitoba Forest Industries complex by Repap Enterprises of Montreal — and Repap's commitment of \$1 billion dollars of new investment over the next ten years — will create a vastly expanded demand for products and services to meet the needs of the construction boom, and the new residents and employees.

For example, it is estimated that Repap's new facility will create 5,000 person-years of construction work and hundreds of new jobs over the next five years.

Consequently, the Pas Indian Band has decided to expand the Otineka Mall by 50,000 square feet. The expansion is currently in the initial planning stages, and major opportunities exist for retail outlets specializing in workwear, footwear, sporting goods, as well as products geared toward the needs of new residents and their families. There are also favorable opportunities for restaurants and, in the planned office level, for medical and financial services.

The Pas Indian Band, in striving for self-sufficiency, administers a number of other businesses and organizations. For example, the Pasquiak Business Development Corporation, the management arm of the Band, operates — in addition to the Otineka Mall and the IGA franchise — the Timberland Trailer Court, the Chimo Lumber Centre, the Pas Indian Band Gravel Operation and the Image Boutique (which is also located in the mall).

The Band also administers the Otineka Health Centre, the Opasquiak Education Authority Inc., Opasquiak Counselling Services, the McGillivray Care Home, and is involved in services such as employment and training, housing, public works, policing, family and social services.

We wish to offer our congratulations to the Pas Indian Band for their many successful endeavours, and wish them luck in their new projects, including the expansion of the Otineka Mall.

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The Pas Indian Band

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